

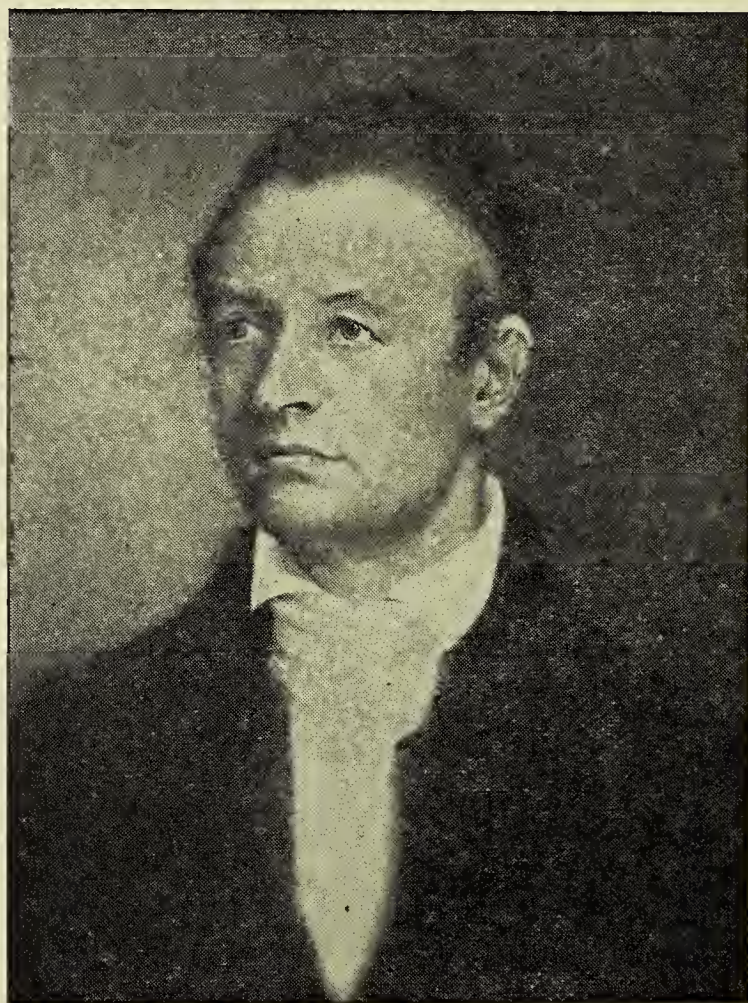
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Adoniram Judson

An address delivered by
Rev. O. P. GIFFORD, D.D.
on the occasion of the
Judson Centennial
Celebration

in Tremont Temple
Boston, Mass., June 24, 1914

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society
Ford Building : : : Boston, Massachusetts



Adoniram Judson

THE name of a babe is sometimes a prophecy fulfilled by the character of the man. Isaac called his second-born Jacob, supplanter. He supplanted Esau twice. Mary named her babe Jesus, Saviour. He saved his people from their sins. In ancient Israel Abda named his son Adoniram, "the lord of exaltation." Solomon sent a levy of thirty thousand men to Lebanon to cut timber for his building. Adoniram was over the levy. A man who can manage thirty thousand laborers for months without a strike may well be called "the lord of exaltation." Rehoboam succeeded Solomon and sent Adoniram to collect tribute. The people stoned him to death. Thus he gave his life in service and sacrifice to his king. In Malden, Massachusetts, in the Congregational parsonage, a babe was born and named Adoniram — "the lord of exaltation." He gave his life in service and sacrifice to a greater than Solomon and to the building of a kingdom that has no frontier.

Heredity and environment have much to do with shaping character. The web of life is spun of threads woven by heredity and environment. Adoniram's father was a stern disciplinarian of the Puritan type. His mother was one of the finest products of New England home life. Strength and beauty were the two pillars in Adoniram's temple.

The traveler in London seeks St. Paul's Cathedral, an island of silence in a sea of sound. Tired of the strife of tongues, he finds rest under the shadow of the Eternal Presence in the great cathedral. The massive walls and springing dome shelter the bodies of men who helped to make England great. Nelson made her mistress of the seas. Wellington broke the spell of Napoleon and freed Europe from the power of France. Greater than either Nelson or Wellington is Sir Christopher Wren, who rebuilt St. Paul's and the city of London after the great fire. In greater London are sixty parish churches planned by the great architect. On the wall of St. Paul's is a memorial tablet to the memory of Sir Christopher Wren, "If you would behold my monument, look about you," — on the beauty of the cathedral; on the city, the capital of an empire; on the sixty parish churches nourishing the soul of the

city, and on the score of churches in the American Republic built after the model of the parish church.

In the city of Malden, Massachusetts, is a noble meeting-house. On one of the walls is a tablet:

IN MEMORIAM.

REV. ADONIRAM JUDSON

BORN AUGUST 9, 1788.

DIED APRIL 12, 1850.

MALDEN, HIS BIRTHPLACE

THE OCEAN, HIS SEPULCHRE

CONVERTED BURMANS,

THE BURMAN BIBLE, HIS MONUMENT.

HIS RECORD IS ON HIGH.

At three years of age, Judson, taught to read by his mother, read a chapter in the Bible to his father. At four years of age he gathered the neighboring children and preached to them. At seven years of age he studied and settled the question of the motion of the earth and sun. At sixteen years of age he entered Providence College, now Brown University, a year in advance. He was graduated three years later as valedictorian.

There are mental maladies, as well as physical diseases. Young men have mental mumps, "swelled head." In college Judson became a French infidel. Our fathers imported their political principles from France; the same ships brought over French infidelity. Few college students in those early days were Christians. Judson was led into the field of religious speculation by one of the most brilliant students in college. Reaching home he revealed his spiritual vacuum. His father reasoned with him, his mother wept and prayed, in vain, for what is unreasonable cannot be reasoned away; what is not of the heart cannot be wept away. Germ diseases have their run,—if the man is in good health, he conquers; if in poor health, they conquer. Much depends upon mental fiber whether a man is conquered by or conquers infidelity. Following his graduation Judson taught school a year and wrote text books. His father was a wise man and sent him on a year of travel, hoping that meeting men would brush away the webs woven by speculation. Infidelity comes of overmuch thinking and too little action. Real life destroys unbelief as the sun burns off mists. Infidelity is born of books; religion is the life of God in the soul of man. There are inventors of religion as of machinery. The patent office is crowded with inventions

that do not work, and the test of reality proves the worthlessness of many inventions and more speculations. During his year of wandering, Judson joined a strolling band of actors and with them cheated the landlord of his just dues again and again — practical infidelity. If a man does not believe in God, why should he treat men honestly? (He afterward retraced his steps and paid the bills.) On his return trip he was a guest in a wayside inn. A dying man was in the next room. The groans of the sufferer, the noises made by the nurse, made sleep impossible. He began to think, "Suppose I were the dying man; am I ready? Suppose the dying man were my friend the infidel, is he ready?" The noises stopped; silence fell upon the house. In the morning the landlord told him that the man was dead. "Do you know who he was?" "Yes; Mr. ———, the most brilliant student ever graduated from Providence College." Two words flashed through Judson's mind. "Dead! Lost!" Turning his face toward home he entered Andover Seminary as a special student. He was not a Christian, but a seeker for the truth. In the Gulf Stream of seminary life the iceberg of his infidelity melted. Unbelief in phrases could not withstand the power of religion in life. A sermon by Rev. Claudius Buchanan turned

his mind toward the mission field and with five other young men he pledged his life to the foreign field.

There was then no foreign missionary organization in the young republic. The states were a mission field, not a missionary force. Four of the young men formulated a petition and signed it, pleading with the churches to organize a foreign missionary board and send them to the foreign land. Young men, who have a long lease of life, are short on patience. Older men, with a short lease of life, are long on patience. We pay years and acquire patience. These elderly men advised the young men to wait, and they would do the best they could. But Judson grew impatient and took an English ship for London that he might interest the English Christians in the missionary movement. There was a war on between France and England. The ship bearing the young missionary was seized by a French privateer and he was thrust into the hold with the common sailors. Seasickness is the mother of pessimism. During the seminary course, Judson had received an invitation to become a tutor in English literature in Providence College and also a call to be the associate pastor of Dr. Griffin in Park Street Church, Boston. In the

hold of the ship, a prisoner with the common sailors, sick unto death, he began to question the wisdom of his choice. To save himself from insanity, he began to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into Latin. The ship surgeon, finding the book, asked for the owner. They conversed in Latin and Judson was moved to the officers' quarters. Landing in Bayonne, France, he marched through the street toward the prison, in company with the common sailors. He lifted up his voice in the little French he knew, to attract attention. The people laughed at him. He then tried English by way of attracting attention. A gentleman from America stepped up to him and warned him: "Be quiet, or you will get into trouble." Judson replied, "I have accomplished my purpose, I will now be quiet." He told his story. The American made him a visit, secured his release from prison, got him a pass from Napoleon to London, and Judson crossed over to England. There was trouble then between England and the United States, and the English Christians did not care to assume the support of the American missionaries. Judson took ship for America. There he found that the Congregational Church had organized their foreign missionary work. Four of the young men were ordained to the foreign field. Judson

and Newell were married and set sail from Salem on the *Caravan* for India. Luther Rice sailed from Philadelphia. England had closed all American ports and under special permit the vessels were allowed to sail on condition that they would not salute any ship on the high seas.

“ New occasions teach new duties.
Time makes ancient good uncouth;
They must upward still and onward,
Who would keep abreast of truth;
Lo! before us gleam her camp fires,
We ourselves must pilgrims be,
Nor attempt the future’s portals
With the past’s blood rusted key.”

Judson was facing a new problem. In a Christian country the children of Christian parents were baptized, but he was facing the heathen world. Could he baptize the children of heathen parents? Should he baptize the heathen parents when they became Christians by sprinkling or immersion? What was the primitive form? The early Church baptized adults on confession of faith. Seventeen weeks on his way from America to India he studied the question and made up his mind that he must become a Baptist. He conferred with his wife and, with a woman’s conservatism,

she refused to go with him. He might become a Baptist; she never would. They reached Calcutta to find a number of books in the library discussing the question on both sides. They read the books carefully and soon after their arrival both applied for membership in the Baptist church.

Luther Rice, sailing from Philadelphia, faced the same problem. He applied for membership in the Baptist church. They were thousands of miles from home, separated from the churches of which they were members, cut off from the source of supplies, without an organization guaranteeing support. Accordingly Rice took ship and returned to America to arouse the Baptist churches and organize "The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions," which is today known as the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.

The country of the Indias was under the control of the British East India Company, a corporation organized for revenue only. They said, "The Indians have religions enough of their own. They do not need Christianity, and we do not need American missionaries,"

and bade the American missionaries take their return ship for home. Judson and his wife drifted around for many months. Luther Rice returned with the pledged support of the Baptist churches, and the new mission struck root in Rangoon. You cannot teach eight million people English. One man can learn a foreign language. Judson bent his energies to the mastery of the Burmese language. He spent seven years before he baptized the first convert, and translated the Burmese Bible, so that he could teach it to the people. It took long years to drive a tunnel through the Hoosac Mountains. It took seven years to tunnel the Burmese language, but once the work is done, a precious freight of truth can be shipped through.

War sprang up between Burma and England. The Burmese king could not distinguish between the Americans and the English. They were of the same color, spoke the same language, worshiped the same God. The American missionary drew his money from the English bank. The king reasoned that he was an English spy. He was seized and cast into prison. For nine months he wore three pairs of fetters. It might be well for men who believe in the dignity of human nature and the divinity of

man, to take a course in a heathen prison where human nature, untouched by the light of revelation, expresses itself in terms of prison life. American prisons feed the prisoners. Heathen prisons do not. If a man is poor, he may starve. If he has rich friends, they may buy the privilege of feeding him. Heathen prisons are unspeakably filthy. Heathenism knows not the alphabet of sanitation. The prison keepers are unspeakably cruel. Judson was as dainty as a woman in the care of his person. He was thrown into a prison whose floors were covered with filth, a fellow prisoner with groups of Burmese heathen whose minds were as filthy as the soil they trod on. Some one had given the king of Burma a lion. When he learned that the English had a lion on their flag, he had the lion moved to the prison and starved, surrounded by the prisoners.

Mrs. Judson begged the use of the empty cage for her husband's room. The noble woman visited him day after day and week after week, bringing him clean clothes and needed food. She was absent from the prison some weeks and returned bearing a babe in her arms.

As the English soldiers pressed more and more closely on Ava, the capital, the king moved

the prisoners from Ava to Aungbinle. Judson wrote the story of the travel in blood on the white manuscript of the Burmese road. The servant of a fellow prisoner tore his turban from his head and gave half to his master and half to Judson and bandaged their feet. Reaching Aungbinle, they were thrown into a more cruel prison and five pairs of fetters put on the missionary's ankles, a long rod thrust between the manacled legs, and he was suspended for hours until his shoulders only touched the soil. His wife followed him and ministered to him. Her sufferings had dried the springs of food, and the missionary, with manacled ankles, carried the starving child from Burmese woman to Burmese woman begging her to feed and thus save the life of his babe.

The English were successful, conquered the Burmese king and made it a condition of peace that all prisoners should be released, and Judson became the translator of the new treaty. The government offered him \$3,000 a year to serve as an English officer. He refused the offer and returned to his missionary work. His wife's health failed. She died and he buried the body under a hopia tree. The babe soon followed the mother and the body was buried beside her. He returned to his work of trans-

lation and teaching, living in an attic over the recitation room.

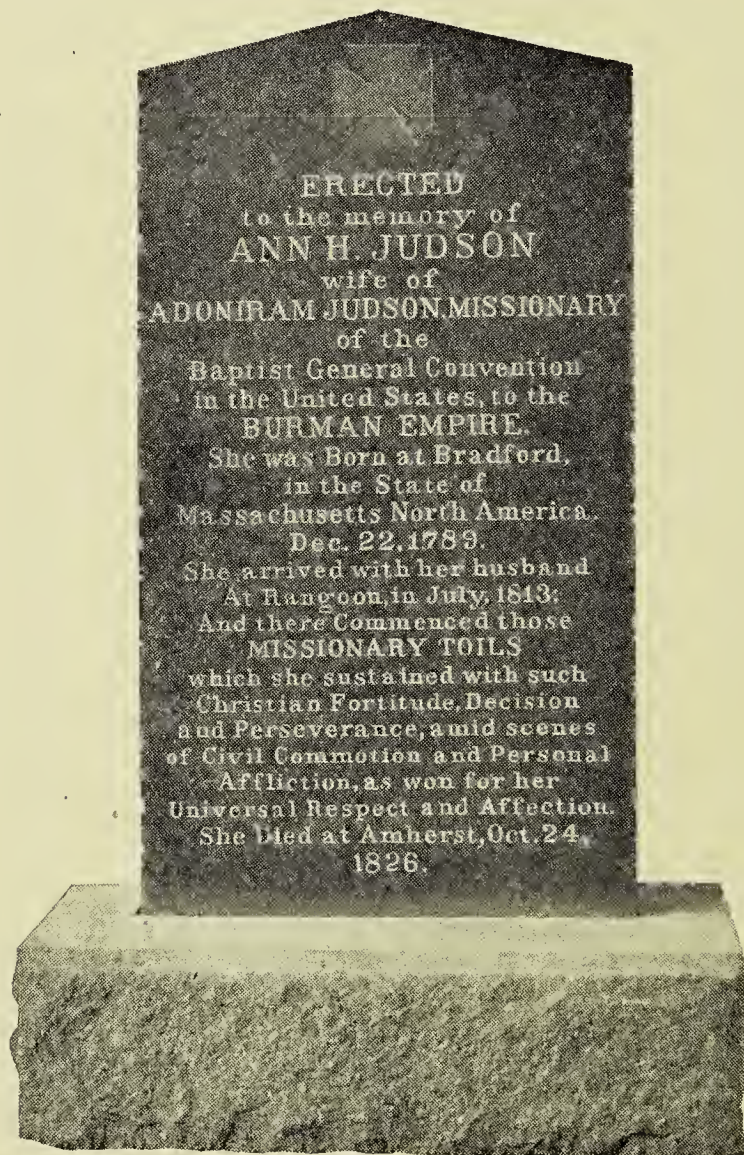
Some years later, he married the widow of George Dana Boardman. The work was carried on for many years. Her health failing, he started for America with his wife and growing family. She died on the journey and was buried at St. Helena. He resumed his voyage with his children and reached home at the end of thirty-two years' absence, a broken man, his voice a whisper. But the Christians of America greeted him as the tide answers to the call of the moon. He went from church to church, missions his message. Dr. Wayland and Dr. Kendrick stood by his side and repeated the message.

After recovering his health and strength, he married Miss Emily Chubbuck, June 2, 1846, and started for his field. One hundred and thirty-nine days from Boston, he sighted the mountains of Burma again. After eighteen months he took up the task to which he had dedicated his life. The work at Moulmein welcomed him, but he longed for Rangoon. Within a year they sailed for and settled in Rangoon, leaving their treasures in the house in Moulmein. Fire destroyed the house and contents.

He wrote to a fellow missionary, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." The new Burman king was a bigoted Buddhist and blocked the work in every possible way. The English flag no longer protected them. Mission work was carried on in secret. Mr. Judson toiled on with his dictionary and met a few converts and inquirers in secret. Ten Burmans, one Karen, and two Americans gathered at the Lord's Supper. Eleven disciples and four inquirers met him in secret. In 1813 he entered Rangoon and in 1847 he re-entered Rangoon and taught eleven disciples. His great work was translation and making the dictionary. Hunted like a wild beast, watched by the government, plotted against by Catholic priests, he was at last driven back to Moulmein. He toiled like a galley slave at his task of translation. November, 1849, he caught a severe cold, followed by dysentery and a congestive fever. A sea voyage was the last resort. Within a week of the time he bade his wife farewell he died after intense agony and his body was committed to the deep. Three weeks after the parting the second child was born; the day of his birth was the day of his father's death. Ten days after the burial of the father the son sought him in the land of life.

Four choices were possible for Adoniram Judson. He might have remained an infidel, lived and died a strolling actor. When the last curtain fell and the lights were cut off, no one would have honored him. He might have returned to Providence College, become a tutor, a professor, or possibly, with his splendid powers, the president of the college. He might have spent his years setting the veneer of culture on the coarser grain of student life. His life work ended, death would have been followed by a quiet funeral, a white slab, and forgetfulness. He might have become associate pastor of the leading church of Boston and; in time, full pastor. He might have given his years to the local church, doing a needed but a narrow work. At the end of life he would have been buried on the edge of Boston, with a polished shaft, a month of memory, and forgetfulness. He stood on the firing line for thirty-two years. He has become a world power. The eyes of Christendom are turned toward the restless sea that covers the quiet body, and the heart of Christendom honors the man who counted not his life dear to himself but gave his powers to his King. The sea has his body in trust. Christ has his spirit. We have the inspiration of his life. Another generation in Burma waits for the gospel;

another generation in America is responsible for giving the gospel. We can trust the sea to guard her treasure, we can trust the Christ to guard his spirit; can the Christ trust us to do our duty as Judson did his and honor his memory by carrying on his work and doing Christ's will?



The illustration on the opposite page shows the new monument to be placed at the grave of Ann Hasseltine Judson. It was recently sent to Burma and will replace the older stone now worn and crumbled by the action of eighty-four years of weather.

FOR additional literature or any other information regarding the work of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, write to any of the following:—

- 1. The nearest District Secretary.*
- 2. Department of Missionary Education, 23 East 26th Street, New York City.*
- 3. Literature Department, Box 41, Boston, Mass.*